

SUNDAY PLUS

Love one another



Loving our future neighbours

Recently I laughed raucously at a meme. It depicted a few sports commentators reeling in their seats with looks of shock and amazement at whatever they had just witnessed. The caption was: "People over 50 watching the birdfeeder in their garden!" It tickled me so much because I had previously seen some photos from my parents on our family chat – photos of winged visitors to their back garden. I hope anyone reading this knows that I am only playfully teasing you. My parents are on to something. They have a deeply Christian instinct here.

In the second reading today from the Book of Revelation, in this

glorious vision of the beyond, the one from the throne pronounces that he is "making the whole of creation new." Heaven will not just be peopled, but will be a glorious remaking of all that is and has been. We believe that from the beginning, God created all that is and marvelling at his handiwork is an act of worship. Ralph Waldo Emerson's encouragement comes to mind: "Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful. For beauty is God's handwriting."

Nature is God's love letter to us.

Creation is God's gift to us, and we would do well to look after it so that future generations may in their turn learn to read God's love letter. Caring for our environment shows love for our neighbours in the future. Concern for ecology is not just for hippies or Franciscans. It is a fundamentally Christian virtue.

Fr Peter Morris' book, *Christian Playfulness*, is available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

By Fr Peter Morris
C.Ss.R.

With an open heart

By Brian Fahy

Michael Ball, the singer, is forever associated with the song, "Love Changes Everything". The song celebrates how being in love changes everything about yourself, how you feel and how you view the world. It changes "earth and sky". It changes "how you live and how you die." It "brings you glory, bring you pain. Nothing in the world will ever be the same".

"Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others. We see this in some holy communities. From time to time, the Church has canonised entire communities that lived the Gospel heroically or offered to God the lives of all their members... We should also remember the more recent witness borne by the Trappists of Tibhirine, Algeria, who prepared as a community for martyrdom."

Pope Francis

This love, when it flowers, leads to parenthood, and certainly then you can sing that nothing will ever be the same! Now love brings you "sleepless nights, change a nappy, walk the floor. Warm a bottle, feed the baby, walk some more." Love will never, never let you be the same.

The love of Jesus for us has the same effect. "Love one another as I have loved you" is a love like no other. It always perseveres in doing good to everyone. Love like that changes everything.

Brian Fahy describes himself as an "apprentice poet". His website is to be found at www.errispoetry.com.

Feast of the week Saturday 17 May

Monks of Tibhirine

"I should like, when the time comes, to have a clear space which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God and of all my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who would strike me down..."

For this life given up, totally mine and totally theirs, I thank God who seems to have wished it entirely for the sake of that joy in everything and in spite of everything. In this "thank you," which is said for everything in my life from now on, I

certainly include you, friends of yesterday and today, and you my friends of this place, along with my mother and father, my brothers and sisters and their families — the hundredfold granted as was promised!

And you also, the friend of my final moment, who would not be aware of what you were doing. Yes, for you also I wish this 'thank you' – and this adieu – to commend you to the God whose face I see in yours.

And may we find each other, happy 'good thieves', in Paradise, if it pleases God, the Father of us both. Amen."

From the Last Testament
of Fr Christian de Chergé,
one of the monks

Loving Lord, let me discover the goodness of the people around me before it is too late for me to show how much I love and treasure them. Amen.

Today:
Acts 14:21-27
Apocalypse 21:1-5
John 13:31-35

Monday:
Acts 14:5-18
John 14:21-26

Tuesday:
Acts 14:19-28
John 14:27-31

Wednesday:
Acts 15:1-6
John 15:1-8

Thursday:
Acts 15:7-21
John 15:9-11

Friday:
Acts 15:22-31
John 15:12-17

Saturday:
Acts 16:1-10
John 15:18-21

Next Sunday:
Acts 15:1-2, 22-29
Apocalypse 21:10-14, 22-23
John 14:23-29